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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1204
INFO RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS IMMEDIATE
RUMIAAA/USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/COMSOC SOUTH IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/CDR JTF-BRAVO IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 001222

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: TFH01: ELECTIONS SITREP - FINAL

REF: A. TEGUCIGALPA 1221
 B. TEGUCIGALPA 1220
 C. TEGUCIGALPA 1219

11. (SBU) Summary. November 29 was a great day for Honduran democracy and the Honduran people displayed great civic commitment in expressing their will in the ballot box. Early Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) results showed that National Party presidential candidate Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo was elected president over Elvin Santos of the Liberal Party, 56 to 36 percent. The elections process was conducted in an exemplary manner and Hondurans went out to vote in significant numbers and were able to cast their votes in a peaceful environment. The same results showed a turnout of 62 percent. A separate quick count also showed Pepe winning, with slightly smaller margin, though with a lower turnout. Santos stalled the release of the TSE results, concerned about a possible technical glitch, but the Ambassador convinced him to drop his objections given the large margin of his loss. Twenty Embassy reporting teams provided uniformly positive reports of orderly and incident-free voting throughout the day. Embassy team observations were consistent with exit polls with Lobo ahead in most locations and voter turnout between 30 and 70 percent. Other observers reported similar results. End Summary.

THE RESULTS

12. (U) The Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) announced shortly after 10 p.m. preliminary results, based on telephoned reports from election results at over half of the nation's polling tables, of the victory of National Party candidate Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo over Liberal Party candidate Elvin Santos, 56 to 36 percent. The remaining three candidates gained 2 percent or less each. These results showed a turnout of 62 percent. A quick count carried out by USAID funded domestic observers, supported by IFES and NDI, showed a Pepe victory of 56 to 39 percent, with a turnout of 48 percent.

13. (SBU) TSE release of the preliminary results was delayed by Liberal Party officials, including Santos, concerned that the preliminary results were not counted correctly. The results are phoned into TSE officials who enter the data into computer. A second official reviews audio tapes of every call and then reenters the data. This review process broke down. The Ambassador spoke to TSE President Saul Escobar (Christian Democrat) and told him that in the interest of the country and of transparency to issue the results. Escobar

agreed and said that in the absence of a consensus he and the National Party Magistrate David Matamoros would vote to release the results. The Ambassador later called Santos and urged him to drop his objection given the wide margin of his loss and the separate quick count showing similar results. Santos agreed to do so, saying that "he would do the right thing." Shortly after the call, the TSE released the results.

THE POLLS

14. (SBU) Twenty Embassy reporting teams covering 16 out of the country's 18 departments reported regularly to the Embassy throughout voting day. They reported no security incidents and only a few minor irregularities regarding the process. One glitch reported was a few instances of private schools declining to serve as polling sites and Embassy officers watched the sites being relocated to public schools without incident except slight delays in the beginning of voting. Polling stations closed on time and voters still waiting to vote at that time were allowed to cast their ballots. In several cases, the new requirement of maintaining polling centers open for private citizens to view the vote count was not followed.

15. (SBU) One member of Embassy team number 1 in Tegucigalpa reported polls closed on time and presidential vote was completed as of 18:11 with a 48 percent voter turnout and 114 votes for Lobo and 52 for Santos at voting station monitored. The second member of Tegucigalpa team 1 reported 44 percent turnout at the voting station monitored with 89 votes for

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Lobo, and 57 for Santos. Embassy team number three in Tegucigalpa reported voter turnout of 51 percent with 189 votes for Lobo and 102 for Santos. Embassy team in Roatan reported voter turnout was 43 percent with 80 votes for Lobo and 58 for Santos. Embassy representative in La Esperanza reported 53 percent turnout with 98 votes for Lobo and 48 for Santos. Embassy team in La Paz reported voting increased in the afternoon to over fifty percent at the polling center monitored. Embassy representative in Intibuca reported 51 percent voter turnout with 98 votes for Lobo and 45 for Santos. Embassy team in Choluteca reported voting turnout was 51 percent with 88 votes for Santos and 76 for Lobo. Embassy team in San Pedro Sula/Villanueva reported voter turnout of 39 percent at polling center monitored. Embassy team in San Pedro Sula/Choloma said polling station monitored closed on time and voter turnout was 50 percent; presidential vote went for Lobo with 87 votes and 83 for Santos. Embassy team in San Pedro Sula/Cortes reported polls closed on time and the few persons still waiting on line were allowed to cast their ballots; in upper class neighborhoods voter turnout was over 50 percent and in lower class neighborhoods under 50 percent. One member of Embassy team in Santa Rosa de Copan in Copan reported 47 percent turnout with 69 votes for Lobo and 60 for Santos. Embassy team in Danli, El Paraiso reported turnout between 45 and 50 percent. Embassy team in Gracias, Lempira reported turnout of 60 percent with 111 votes for Lobo and 83 for Santos. Embassy team in Santa Barbara reported turnout of 45 percent with 93 votes for Lobo and 44 for Santos. Embassy team in La Ceiba, Atlantida reported turnout of 36 percent with 129 for Lobo and 80 Santos. Embassy team in Trujillo, Colon reported turnout of 43 percent with 62 votes for Lobo and 47 for Santos.

16. (U) FEC Chairman Steven Walther reported visiting a number of polling sites and passed along observations similar to those of Embassy teams. He reported enthusiastic voters, many who told him they saw the election as the way to move the country out of its current crisis. He did not observe any problems, technical or otherwise. He said by mid-afternoon he had seen turnout rates between 40 and 60 percent.

SECURITY

¶7. (U) The anti-coup demonstration announced to be held at the Pedagogical University in Tegucigalpa never materialized.

¶8. (U) The Special Human Rights Prosecutor in San Pedro Sula reported to Emboff that all 36 demonstrators arrested in San Pedro Sula were released.

¶9. (U) A pipe bomb was thrown from a moving vehicle into a parking lot of Liberal Party headquarters in Tocoa, Colon, damaging two vehicles.

¶10. (SBU) Comment: The results are a victory for Honduran democracy and an important if insufficient step on the road to restoration of constitutional order. The turnout will probably fall somewhere between the numbers from the two results, putting it in the same range of the 2005 presidential election's 55 percent.

LLORENS